



# Extra! extra! Read all about it! The benefits of a book

Reading is a pastime that can help you to escape to another world, without leaving your house! Reading regularly has lots of benefits for both body and mind.

Reading may appear to be a solitary and passive activity, but there is a lot going on beneath the surface. It helps to keep the brain active.

When we read we create mental simulations of the activities, sights and sounds of scenes in a story; we blend these with our own memories and experiences, all of which stimulates the neural pathways in our brain. This mental stimulation can help to slow mental decline.

In addition, research suggests that reading for 30 minutes a week increases health and wellbeing. Reading for pleasure has been found to improve our confidence and self-esteem, providing the grounding we need to pursue our goals and make life decisions. It can also aid our sleep and reduce feelings of loneliness.



Reading for just 6 minutes reduces stress by 68%, making it to be more effective than listening to music (61%) or walking (42%).

Just 6 minutes of reading can slow your heart rate, ease muscle tension and has a positive effect on your state of mind.


Adults who read books for more than 3.5 hours each week are 23% less likely to die compared to non-readers.

People who read fiction have improved social skills and a better 'theory of mind': the ability to understand the thoughts of other people that are different to their own.

Readers are 2.5% less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease; it slows mental decline in the elderly by 32%.

Everything you read fills your head with new information— you never know when you might need it!

What you read matters — spiritual texts have been shown to lower blood pressure and create a sense of calm, while self-help books have been proven to help people suffering from some mood disorders and mild mental illness.

Reading increases your exposure to new words; inevitably it increases your vocabulary too. 

Sources: Wall Street Journal; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB118583572352482728>; The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/08/book-up-for-a-longer-life-readers-die-later-study-finds>

## Recommended reading

For book recommendations and book bundles

<https://www.whsmith.co.uk/dept/richard-and-judy>

Reading groups for everyone and book recommendations

<https://readinggroups.org/groups>